

poet gives so faithfully the atmosphere of
the churches of
England, and of its Church—the gentle
austerity, the
propriety, the false culture and the true,
the quaint
mingling of the sensible and the fanciful, the
quiet beauty,
the eloquent attempt at a concordat with
Destiny. Coleridge,
indeed, has said of *The Temple*:

'To appreciate this volume, it is not
enough that the
reader possess a cultivated judgement,
classical taste, or
even poetic sensibility, unless he be likewise
a *Christian*,
and both a zealous and an orthodox, both a
devout and
devotional Christian, But even this will not
quite suffice.
He must be an affectionate and dutiful child
of the Church/

So the Cumaean Sibyl in her cave cried
'procul este,
profani' to the comrades of Aeneas, before
she unveiled
the mysteries of eternity. Obedient, the
profane withdrew.
But here they may be less docile. If
Coleridge
meant that only a fervent Anglican can find
in Herbert
the fullest enjoyment, he is hard to
contradict; but if
he meant that no one else could really
appreciate him,
that is another matter. Belief makes a
difference, but not
so much as this.

Some, indeed, will deny that it need make
any difference
at all to the reader with a taste for
poetry; just as
they pretend that Milton, being 'a classic'
and 'immortal',
and all the other things great poets are
called by critics,
has lost no jot of his force with the change
of centuries

and creeds, and can mean as much to us
today as if we
were still passionate Puritans. It is the usual
cry of those
who make 'Art' a last religion in place of all
the rest,
withdrawing it from the world of dust and
sweat into
a sort of Platonic heaven of pure form,
where a love-lyric
becomes just an exquisite flow of noise and
images, and a
High Mass merely an elaborate ballet.
Coleridge represents
one extreme; these aesthetic persons
the other. But